

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 31, No. 9

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Whole No. 372



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 48

OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY

Published by Arthur Westbrook, Cleveland, Ohio. Reprints of stories published by George Munro in Old Sleuth Library. Some new stories were evidently added. The late issues reprinted stories from Beadles Half Dime Library. Lasted 203 issues, April 17, 1908 to May 17, 1912. Issued weekly in bright yellow bordered colored covers. Size slightly larger than the standard 8x11 weekly, 32 pages. For a time the publishers bound 3 issues together which they sold at a dime. Normal issues sold for 5c each.

THE TWO KING BRADYS AND THEIR GIRL DETECTIVE By J. Edward Leithead

No writeup of Old King Brady, super-sleuth, can be done without reference to two top-notch articles previously written, "Frances Worcester Doughty, Uncrowned King of the Dime Novel Writers" by Charles Bra in published in the August-September 1935 issue of Dime Novel Roundup, and "Old King Brady" by the late George H. Cordier, published in the Special Birthday Number of Dime Novel Roundup 1938. The late Harold C. Holmes also did a review of Old Brady's first appearance print, New York Detective Library No. 154, dated Nov. 14, 1885, title of the story, Old King Brady, the Sleuthhound (there is a chance it may have been run earlier as a story paper serial).

Anyway, Holmes gives his usual interesting outline of the tale (DNR Sept. 1940) which introduced that "tall, distinguished looking old gentleman of striking appearance and peculiar dress... a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white hat with an extraordinarily broad brim" who was to rival Nick Carter, Old and Young Sleuth, Old Cap Collier and, in the opinion of many readers, outclass them all.

Frank Tousey, publisher, had been eager to put a detective hero in the fiction field against other profitable (for their publishers) super-sleuths and his worries in that respect were over when a Brooklyn-born traveling salesman (who had previously written for Tousey publications) produced the instantly popular Old King (James) Brady, starting him on a career of crime detection that was to enchant detective story addicts for thirty

years. The soon-to-be ex-salesman, Mr, Doughty, in the course of his business travels had picked up a vast amount of information which he later used as local color for his stories. George Cordier quotes from an undated issue of the New York Tribune concerning this:

"But the local color supplied for these tales was far from faked. His (Doughty's) library was papered with large maps, which he consulted when writing about certain parts of the country with which he was not familiar, and hundreds of reference books were always at his elbow. Because of this conscientious effort to make his stories accurate, readers of his highly imaginative thrillers came into possession of bits of geographical and historical knowledge that might not have been readily administered in any other form. It was due to this fact, his publishers say, that his Old King Brady series was popular more than thirty years. In other words, he served solid food with his dessert."

Writing under the nom. "A New York Detective," Doughty produced some 54 Old King Brady stories (in New York Detective Library) with the old detective pitted against criminals, male and female, guilty of everything on the crime calendar, and besides these, Doughty wrote 31 tales of Old King Brady versus the James Boys, printed in the same Detective Library, which cost a dime. The latter tales were without doubt the best dime novels ever written about the James-Younger gang; in fact, between Nos. 529 and 801, the last number, all but 6 detective stories were James Boys tales.

The Old King Brady series had some

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ERRATA

Your editor sure pulled a boner on the cover of the August issue. The publication illustrated is that of Street & Smith's Literary Album while the data is about Old Sleuth Weekly. The picture of the Literary Album is reprinted below with the proper data.



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 47

STREET & SMITH'S LITERARY ALBUM

Although not a true "dime novel" many dime novel authors were contributors to this early Street & Smith effort in the publishing field. Literary Album began December 2, 1865 and lasted 180 issues until May 29, 1869. It was issued weekly and contained numerous woodcuts in its 16 pages. Sold for 10c and feature serials, short stories and sketches. It was smaller than the standard size story paper being 15½x11 inches.

I will pay \$5.00 each for the following numbers of FRANK LESLIES BOYS OF AMERICA: 47 49 50 53 57. Must have both covers and all advertisements, not torn or mended.

Will pay \$1.00 each for certain single numbers of GOLDEN DAYS and HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. Send stamp for my want list. Also want bound volumes Nos. 22, 25, 26 and 27 of GOLDEN DAYS. Also wanted: Cricket Library Nos. 8, 14 and 15.

good titles (Doughty had a flair for good titles in all that he wrote); these, for example, in New York Detective; No. 417, The House With the 30 Steps, or, Old King Brady and the Great Pearl Street Poisoning Case, 456, Old King Brady and the Double Man, or, Shadowing a Shadow, 462, The Great Aztec Treasure, or, Old King Brady and the Golden Chest, 509, The Queen of the "Queer," or, Old King Brady and the Brick Place Tragedy, 517, Old King Brady and the Silver Skull, or, The Mysterious Case of Burney the Banker, 523, Old King Brady and the Pirates' Treasure, or, The Secret of the Golden Ducats.

A few titles were prophetic of two kinds of cases which frequently required the services of the later formed Brady Detective Bureau, when Old King Brady had a weekly of his own. Secret Service: Chinatown cases (usually New York but sometimes 'Frisco) and cases implicating members of the medical profession; of both kinds these titles in New York Detective were forerunners: 392. The Murder of Dr. Burdell, 468, Dr. Death, 521, Old King Brady and the Opium Prince. In these stories, much longer of course than the later ones in Secret Service, Old King Brady, not yet having acquired a partner and a lady assistant, occasionally worked with Young Sleuth (of New York Detective and Young Sleuth Library) and also Carl Greene, who was always chasing Jesse James.

Some of Doughty's Old King Brady stories were run serially in Tousey's Boys of New York story paper and reprinted in New York Detective, but not all of them. Although Tousev did not publish a "thick book" line of novels like Street & Smith, it might have been quite profitable for him to have done so, particularly stories of Old King Brady which were booklength. In that way, many admirers of Doughty and his detective hero could have had a chance to read the fine early tales which a lot of us missed in the Boys of New York and New York Detective Library editions.

I'm not positive about this, but it would seem that Old King Brady's

first OFFICIAL case was a serial in Boys of New York (purchased by Frank Tousey from George Munro, 1876, to become Happy Days in 1894), beginning in No. 736, the title 99, 99th Street, or, The House Without a Door. A Story of the Thriling Adventures of Old King Brady, the Detective on His First Case. It was reprinted, same title, complete in New York Detective No. 424, dated in 1891, I think.

Doughty himself couldn't have improved on Charlie Bragin's description of the famous old detective—it's a gem:

"In Old King Brady we have a detective worthy of a place among the most celebrated crime solvers of fiction. Here we have no impossible character, no superman, but a real detective, always acting in character. Old King Brady does no theorizing from slender clews. He wields no magnifying glass. False whiskers seldom disguise his strong features. He is a poor shot, and cannot even swim. He proceeds in a common way, just as a real detective would, with plenty of leg work, a bit of good old Irish luck, and a liberal use of stool-pigeons.

"When captured by the villains, and in dire peril of his life, he does not defy the scoundrels in high sounding dime novel dialogue. Indeed, he begs for his life, often in pretty abject terms, too. Nor does he labor for virtue alone. He does not prowl around to discover crime. He waits for some paying case to turn up, being strictly after the almighty dollar. In more than one tale, his hardest work is beating some other detective to the monetary reward. In one case he is disgusted with his client, believes him to be a scoundrel but consoles himself with the reflection that at least his fee is sure to be paid!"

In 1899, Tousey launched one of his most profitable nickel weeklies (eventually the top one), with color covers, for the old black-and-white illustrated wrapper had now been replaced. It was called "Secret Service: Old and Young King Brady, Detectives" and

the by-line was "a New York Detective."

But F. W. Doughty, a higher priced author than any other on the Tousey writing staff, did not at once contribute to the new and long-lived series about his own creation. No. 1 was titled The Black Band, or, The Two King Bradys Against a Hard Gang. An Interesting Detective Story. Not a promising title after all those engaging ones in New York Detective. Nor was the story much better.

Since Doughty had created a detective character who had proved a big hit, it is evident that Tousey thought to save money by letting any of his writers who could do a detective story for less than Doughty, handle the new

series.

Walter Fenton Mott, who wrote most of the Young Sleuth Library, was one who did early Secret Service tales. Luis Philip Senarens was another, writing them toward the end of the series, perhaps 100 issues or so, which would make Senarens begin his work on them in the early 600's, for this weekly published 726 originals before the series was reprinted.

In a letter to George French, dated January 30, 1938, reprinted in DNR June 1943, (Mrs.) Laurana Sheldon Ferris states, "I wrote only a few Jesse James Stories, they were originals—not rewrites. I wrote one O'd King Brady story . . . I wrote several Buffalo Bill Stories. The last time I saw Mr. Cody (Buffalo Bill) he to'd me very smilingly that I had 'ruined his reputation'."

Well, Laurana Sheldon makes one more who did an early Serret Service, and there may have been others. But although Mott and Senarens were pretty good detective story writers they were not F. W. Doughty. Circutrouble undoubtedly lation Frank Tousey of this, and Doughty was once more put in charge of the old detective's career, and with a partner added, Young King Brady or Harry Brady, a young man who had proven himself, in the language of that day, a very "keen detective." Harry was no relative to Old King Brady, yet the latter had a son, Dr. Horace Brady, who appeared only once that I know of, in the story, At Midnight on the 11th, or, Old King Brady and the Mystery of Pier A, published in both Boys of New York and New York Detective.

Exactly where Doughty took up the Old King Brady pen in Secret Service I'm not sure, as I haven't early numbers to check with, but there is no doubt that circulation climbed rapidly from that issue onward. With enough early issues I could have told where Doughty began, because he always concluded his stories by bringing in the title at the end. Just when and why he stopped writing them and Lu Senarens took over above the 600-mark, I cannot say. Doughty was still going strong as far as Secret Service tales were concerned.

Senarens, I think, did a very creditable job. He was thoroughly experienced, one of Tousey's top writers (I like that picture of him at his desk in the February 1957 issue of Dime Novel Roundup, one of the best covers we've had). It had been Doughty's habit pretty often to introduce in his plots some young man (sometimes in the teens but usually older) whose career was, through force of circumstances, bound up in or threatened by some crime or its perpetrators that was brought (fortunately for the hapless youth) to the attention of the Detective Bureau. Senarens plotted some of his stories along these lines.

Good examples are: The Bradys and the Telegraph Boy (455), The Bradys and the Yellow Boy (490), The Bradys and the Yellow Boy (490), The Bradys and the Boy Shadower (529), The Bradys and the Newsboy (524), The Bradys' Under a Cloud (584), The Bradys' Little Spy (606), The Bradys and the Schoolboy (618), The Bradys and the Boy Spy (624), The Bradys and the Dumb Boy (632)—all these by Doughty; The Bradys and the Factory Boy (635), The Bradys and the Banker's Boy (638), The Bradys and the Blind Boy (676), The Bradys and the Bundle Boy (682), The Bradys and the Bundle Boy (682), The Bradys and the Circus

Boy (694)—by Senarens. Since he must have been editing all of Tousey's "Big Six" at this time, the wonder is that Senarens was able to do a weekly story of such good quality for Secret Service.

George Cordier, in his admiration for Doughty's application of local colcr. made a couple of good selections from Secret Service which are well worth repeating. The first is from No. The Bradys and the Hounds, or, The Mystery of the Midas Mine:

"The signal being given the launch started, shooting up Coyote Canyon. which must now be described. formation of these canyons in and around Colorado mark the effect of mighty convulsions of nature in ages long past. Many claimed that all were washed out by water, but it would seem as though a single glance at these mighty rifts in the Rocky Mountains would be enough to satisfy the ordinary mind that such cannot have been the fact, and that the formation of these canyons was due to a shrinkage of the earth's surface owing to volcanic action."

And the second, from No. 289, The Bradys and the Bandits' Gold, or, Secret Work in the Southwest:

" 'Poor country this.' remarked Harry.

" 'Well, I should say so,' growled Jack Peters. 'A man might better be dead than stuck down here.'

" 'Now that is where you are both wrong,' said Old King Brady. 'I have been all over this section years ago, although I don't claim any knowledge of this particular swamp. The land is astonishingly rich and with this mild climate, these low-lying tracts, properly drained, could easily be reclaimed and southwestern Arkansas converted into a garden-spot of the world."

At the time he resumed writing about Old King Brady, Doughty apparently had considerable unused Western material left over from doing so many tales of Old King Brady and the James Boys. I can't think of any other explanation of his preoccupation with the Western scene for his two

King Bradys in runs only now and then interrupted by crime in a big city or a manhunt in Chinatown; for example—Secret Service No. 251, The Bradys at Bandit Gulch, 252, The Bradys in the Foot-hills, 253, The Bradys and Brady the Banker, or, The Secret of the Old Santa Fe Trail, subtitle given to show it had a Western setting, which Nos. 254 and 255 did not, so we will pass on to 256, The Bradys and Tombstone Tom, or, a Hurry Call from Arizona, 257, The Bradys' Backwoods' Trail, then two non-Westerns, 260, The Bradys and the Border Band, 261, The Bradys in Sample City, or, The Gang of the Silver Seven, then 262, a Chinatown case, the kind of police investigation that Doughty made fascinatingly his own, as shall be presently enlarged upon, 263, Bradys' Black Butte Raid, 264 non-Western, 265, The Bradys at Kicking Horse Canyon, 266 non-Western, 267, The Bradys' Wild West Clew, 268 The Bradys' Dash to Deadwood, 269, The Bradys and "Humpy Hank," or, The Silver Gang of Shasta, 270, non-Western, 271, The Bradys' Western Raid, 272, The Bradys at Fort Yuma, 273 and 274 non-Western, 275, The Bradys' California Call, or, Hot Work in Hangtown, 276, The Bradys' Million Dollar Camp, or, Rough Times in Rattlesnake Canyon.

As time went on the Bradys were less often called upon to journey westward, but now and then a case would turn up to take them there. I'm not including the West Coast in that statement, as they were frequently in San Francisco, were there immediately following the terrible earthquake of 1906 in No. 391, The Bradys and the 'Frisco Fire Fiends, or, Working for Earthquake Millions. Incidentally, Nick Carter was at the same scene of disaster in New Nick Carter Weekly No. 503, Nick Carter's Earthquake Clue, or, Amid Falling Walls in San Francisco. The picture covers of the two weeklies, by different artists, both had backgrounds of crumbling walls highlighted by raging flames.

The late Robert H. Smeltzer, in a short sketch of F. W. Doughty (DNR

for April 1961), mentioned that "He (Doughty) was a member of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society and possessed a fine collection of old coins. He was fond of gems, and especially enjoyed collecting semi-precious stones, garnet, agate etc. Likewise he owned a wonderful collection of valuable stamps and a fine collection of old books. From the latter were gleaned most of the fact articles and pictures appearing in Happy Days." Charlie Bragin also mentioned Doughty's "important contribution to the study of numismatics. His work on American coins is the accepted standard today." George Cordier spoke of this text-book, too, and added, "This hobby of his (coin collecting) he made use of in many of his stories. Two of them in particular ... one entitled 'The Cellar of Death', and the other 'The House of Skulls,' both in Secret Service, and there were others that the writer read in the New York Detective Library. In the first story (No. 411) a young man is lured into the power of brutal criminals through his interest in old coins, and in the other (No. 438) a hideous monster is tracked to his lair through his desire to add to the number of his collection."

Back along I mentioned Old King Brady stories in which Doughty made a target of doctors. Although Nick Carter's smartest criminal opponent. who made many reappearances, was Dr. Jack Quartz, and Dr. Codman, the poisoner, was another slick article, it does not seem that Frederic Van Rensselaer Dey (who invented both criminal doctors) had any grudge whatever against medical men. On the other hand, Doughty, whatever his reason may have been, repeatedly put the Bradys on the track of doctors involved in one kind of shady business or another, even murder. Medical students came under his fire, too.

As a devotee of the Bradys, Cordier was well aware of this, remarking, "Doughty evidently cherished a violent antipathy to members of the medical profession, he having made use of

them as villains in a large number of his stories. The following are a few of the titles in which the criminal is a disciple of Esculapious: (SS 270) Dr. Dockery, (SS 339) The Seven Masks, or, Strange Doings at the Doctors' Club (SS 359) The Death Club, (SS 392) The Race With Death, or Dealings With Dr. Duval, (SS 401) The Demon Doctor, (SS 436) The Doctors' Death League, (SS 439) The Daring Deal, or, The Bargain With Dr. Death, (SS 517) The Five Jars."

Cordier believed there was something to be said for Doughty's attitude, aptly quoting the famous Sherlock Holmes in the story, "The Speckled Band" (Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by A. Conan Doyle):

"'Subtle enough and horrible enough. When a doctor does go wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge.'"

Holmes was speaking of Dr. Grimesby Roylott, lately in the British Army in India, who was plotting the double murder of his twin stepdaughters—to secure for himself alone the wealth of his now deceased wife, the widow of a Major Stoner when he married her—by the diabolical use of a swamp adder, according to Holmes "the deadliest snake in India." A fascinatingly sinister detective story, as are so many of the Sherlock Holmes tales.

(to be continued)

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup, Nos. 1 to 237 for sale. Some reprints, all interesting, 12 for \$1.00 or all 237 numbers for \$18.00 postpaid.

Ralph F. Cummings 161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

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DIME NOVELS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

September 1863

On September 1, Beadles issued Beadles Dime Novels #59, Kent, the Ranger; or The Fugitives of the Border, by Edward S. Eillis. The London office of Beadle published Beadles American Library No. 31, The Scout, by Warren St. John.

An the 15th of the month the first issue of Beadles Dime Tales appeared. This publication featured short stories. Included in this first issue were "Simon Kenton's Indian Torture Ride": "Mrs. Austin and the Bear"; "Brandt the Chief" and "Murphy Saving the Fort."

Flag of Our Union featured a new story by Mrs. C. F. Gerry titled: "The Chief's Daughter; or, The Grey-Eagle of the Sioux." A Romance of the West, beginning in the September 26 issue.

During the month Irwin P. Beadle & Co. issued its first publication. "Ten Cent Song Book for the Millions, No. 1." The original Beadle first issued its 11th Song book titled "Who Will Care for Mother Now?"

Also published during the month was Gustave Aimard's "The Gold Seekers." A Tale of California and Mrs. Henry Wood's "Squire Trevelyn's Heir," both published by T. B. Peterson & Brothers of Philadelphia. Tickner & Fields published Nathaniel Hawthorne's latest book, "Our Old Home." A Series of English Sketches.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Mr. Leithead:

First of all, my appreciation for your fine articles in the Round-Up. They are PRACTICAL and I have always found them tremendously useful in my work, correspondence, etc. I'd be in sad shape if I didn't have your data to furnish Club members.—Charles Bragin, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: I am interested in certain numbers of Fame and Fortune and early copies of Young Wild West. I have around 260 copies of novels to sell.—J. D. Moore, 4400 Daleview Av., Dayton 5, Ohio.

Dear Ed: I need and hope to acquire copies of a number of Altsheler's stories. Preferably original editions. Please let me know whenever you come across any good copies.—Dan Bundza, Worcester, Mass.

Dear Eddie: This year I hope to compile the subject index for "A Guide to Edward S. Ellis" and possibly, complete work on the introduction and the section about the Ellis pseudonyms. Work on the main bibliography, Section III, is now in the home stretch with 439 out of the 464 entries completed. There is still quite a bit of revision needed but the back of the work is now broken. So the completion of the bibliography is no longer a dream. — Denis S. Rogers, London England.

Concerning nickel novels, at long last I've been able to complete my set of Comrades—72 issues. It was "tough" going to locate that last issue, No. 19 which completed the set; but it came in at last.

—Edward G. Ingraham, Havertown Pa. The Old King Brady article is coming along fine, although, with the fierce heat wave we've had, I was able to type only two or three pages a day. Makes me think of the times when I could hammer away on the typemill all day and into the night, for pulp Westerns, to meet some deadline. I couldn't do it now. — Ed Leithead, Philadelphia, Pa.

GOOD OLD DIME NOVEL DAYS MY FIRST NOVEL

I remember distinctly how my first interest in dime novels was aroused. It was back in 1900. My sister's girl friend gave her a number of love story books and amongst the lot was one called Phil Scott, the Indian Detective. As soon as my sister said she didn't want the book, I grabbed it up and went to my room to read it. Of

course not in one sitting, as I was

only a lad of eleven.

When I started reading Phil Scott, the Indian Detective, I didn't pay too much attention to the missing last page. It was only when I came to that part where Phil Scott was down in an old mansion prowling around in the dark and a big mastiff sprang for his throat did I realize the last page was gone. It left me in a dither.

It was all of three years before I ran across a copy of the book in an old second-hand book store, then to find upon rereading it that the remaining part consisted of only two paragraphs in which Phil Scott slew the mastiff, then went to the young lady whose case he had been handling and told her she need fear no more from her enemies, as they ceased to exist. But when he found she had fallen in love with him, he asked her to be his wife. She consented.

I was a bit sore at the author for bringing his story to such a brief ending. As the novel was all of 300

pages.

In between whiles while I was searching for the Phil Scott novel my cousin gave me Gentleman Joe, the Gilt Edge Sport, by Joe Badger, that helped to get me started on nickel weeklies.

Up to my eighteenth year I had read oodles of Nick Carter's, Old King Brady, Young Wild West, Pluck and Luck, Work and Win, Deadwood Dick, Old Sleuth, Old Cap Collier, and Frank Reade series. In fact anything that was hair-raising.

As to Muldoon, the Liberty Boys Frank and Dick Merriwell, and Buffalo Bill I'd read a few, but they didn't take to me like the other books. Which does not include Castleman, and Alger's books. For other boys books I've read a slough.

In fact I once had a novel in which Nick Carter's father was tracking down some crooks and met his death. I believe that is where Nick came into the picture later.

> -Albert E. Johnson Sacramento, Calif.

NEWSY NEWS

Ralph F. Cummings

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

Bill Burns has been very ill. He was in the hospital for 18 days and is now recovering at home.

Fred Lee's eyes have been bothering him. He has been told by his doctor not to read fine print which is quite a handicap for a dime novel enthusiast.

Carl Linville completed a fine trip, with a friend of his from Kansas, I believe he said by the name of Mr. Meyers. They visited with Lou Kohrt down in Houston, Texas, and Lou took them around to some of the historical places, also they stopped at J. P Guinon's, and had a very nice time there. Not sure if he said he stopped to see Gerald McIntosh or not, but believe he did. Then they left for Florida, and visited with Bill Claggett and I believe he said Roy Morris too. All in all it was a very nice trip, and it made Carl feel lots better all around, for he received fine sunlight and air galore, made him feel like a new man all over again. Carl is now at home, and now and then he thinks over the wonderful trip he had. Makes us all wish we were with him, and Mr. Meyers. They stayed a while with Carl's sister, down in Florida, and he says one night while they were there they had quite a freezing spell, lots of vegetables, citrus fruits, etc. were froze up. That sure was a humdinger down there, Bill Claggett wrote up to me that his water pipes were froze up, and to think of such a thing down in Florida. I guess everyone got a taste of last winter.

Yes, Carl and his friend did stop to see Roy Morris and his wife.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

60. Daniel A. Bundza, 31 Stoneleigh Road, Worcester, Mass. (New address) 261. Michael Fogaris, 492 Lafayette St., Passaic, New Jersey (New member) 262. Dr. Jerry R. Hale, 105 No. Fourth St., Smithville, Tenn. (New member)

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